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# what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Dear Colleagues:

Whew! Now that the presidential election is over we can watch television again without all those ads! And we can move forward as a nation with the certainty that the democratic process continues to work.

November sees the beginning of the holiday season, starting with Veterans Day. Special events and holidays give us the opportunity to take time out of our busy lives to reflect on what's really important. I'm really proud of all of our regional offices and all the facilities for their responses to the call for our youth to participate in restorative justice projects and activities that allow them to interact with veterans – men and women who have made sacrifices and given back to our country. Our kids need that interaction, and I think the veterans will be happy to spend time with them.

Veterans Day gives us the chance to reflect on the maturing process. As we grow and mature, we become less centered on self and more concerned for others. When we are babies, we are egocentric – we're dependent on others for our happiness, for fulfillment and for our basic needs. As we grow to adulthood, we develop a healthy sense of self – we learn to consider the needs of others and to help others without thinking about ourselves.

As we journey through life, we become aware that the greater good is more important than self. I hope that we can all develop that idea in ourselves and in our agency. The strength of OJJ is how much we value our mission, and make our mission more important than our individual gain or promotion. Unselfishness helps us move forward as individuals and as an organization. When we work as a team, and we don't care who gets the credit as long as the job gets done, we are working for the greater good.

Unselfishness leads us out of self-destructive patterns. Have you ever noticed that when you're depressed (and we all get down sometimes) it's all about "Me"? "MeMeMe!" But when we shift our attention to others and focus on something other than "Me," we start to feel better. You can't stay down when you're about helping other people.

The bottom line as we prepare for Veterans Day is that we are helping our kids focus on helping others. We are helping our kids to mature by putting others first, and that in turn helps our kids. As one young man at Jetson said recently, it makes him feel "wonderful" to do something nice for someone else.

I guarantee, to the extent that you make yourself less important and make our mission more important, the less you will be affected by the petty stuff. Take the high road...make the noble response, and don't get bogged down with "Me." When you rise above the petty stuff, and think about how you can help others in your work, your home and your faith community, you will feel better about yourself.

Have a wonderful Veterans Day. I know that many of our staff will be working and some will be working with our kids to help them observe this holiday that honors our nation's most unselfish citizens. You – OJJ staff – are great examples of unselfish, noble, mission-driven people. Thanks for taking care of our kids – every day in every office and region.

And one last thing, a shout-out to my DAD, a World War II veteran, one of the brave men of the 457<sup>th</sup> Army Air Corps. Thanks for your service, DAD!

Sincerely, "Doc"

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